

EXHIBIT 2
DATE 4/16/2013
HJ 29

For: Montana House Judiciary Committee

From: Diane Yarus
425 Ponderosa Ln
Kalispell, MT

RE: Joint Resolution requesting an interim study of human trafficking in Montana

I am a member of Soroptimist International of Kalispell. Soroptimist is a volunteer service organization for business and professional women. Human Trafficking has been a focus of our organization for over a decade. Locally we have partnered with other organizations and public offices in the Kalispell area to raise awareness of this crime and how it impacts citizens of Montana. I have twice attended the Northwest Coalition Against Trafficking conference in Portland Oregon. There I met with law enforcement, victims, and victim advocates about how the crime plays out on the street. Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking is only one facet of human trafficking but it is the largest and one of the fastest growing illegal activities worldwide. The internet is providing easy and veiled access to Montana youth, making this an invisible crime with very low risk to the criminals exploiting and destroying the lives of others. Attached are documented cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children and forced prostitution of Montana youth.

This legislature has taken the issue of human trafficking seriously this session and I applaud the efforts of representatives that have presented and passed important legislative measures to improve Montana's response to this crime. But more work is needed. This resolution is an important and necessary step in making sure Montana can create the legal framework necessary to combat human trafficking; punish traffickers, support survivors and educate and protect our citizens especially minors from falling victim.

The resolution clearly states the facts about human trafficking so I won't repeat the statistics but in order for Montana to take effective action against it, more information is needed and must be shared amongst the many public and private organizations and agencies that interface with both the criminals, victims and potential victims of this crime. Passing laws is one thing, making sure our justice system has the training and tools necessary to implement the law is another. Montana desperately needs to evaluate our ability to protect and restore victims, but just as important, we must insure that we can also successfully prosecute and appropriately punish the sellers *and* buyers that create the market for this crime to flourish.

Please support LC2076.

I thank you for your service and for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Diane Yarus